Samford Hall Scheduled for Restoration

Auburn University has launched an accelerated plan for the restoration of campus icon Samford Hall in time for the university’s sesquicentennial in 2006.

President William Walker said the university must act quickly to save the 114-year-old landmark from the infirmities of structural old-age.

The project is projected to cost up to $22 million. The university will seek private financing to restore the building to its 19th-century appearance but with 21st-century utilities.

Walker said safety rather than aesthetics is the primary reason for the timing of the restoration.

“Due to the age and condition of the building, there are important safety considerations for the building and its occupants,” he said.

“Samford Hall has been a nationally and even internationally recognized symbol of Auburn University for more than a century, and we want to make sure that it is in good condition for many more generations.”

To expedite a normally lengthy planning process, the Board of Trustees on Nov. 15 authorized Walker to immediately initiate a search for an architect and a construction manager. The administration will return to the board in early 2003 with recommendations. The expedited selection process will shave months off the construction schedule.

Initial plans call for the building’s occupants to move out during the summer of 2004 and the restoration to begin that fall, with completion set for summer 2006. The building would be reoccupied in time for the university’s 150th anniversary that fall.

The building’s problems stem from both the 19th-century construction and the addition of 20th-century utilities, such as obsolete air conditioning, plumbing and electrical systems.

Game-Day Changes Enhance Tailgating; Fans Supportive

Auburn’s new approach to football game days won favorable reviews from many fans this fall.

The plan, modeled on plans at other SEC institutions, provided picnic areas in the center of campus, added safety measures around the stadium and provided more parking within walking distance of the stadium and a transit system for those who wanted to ride.

“We’ve received many, many phone calls and e-mails from fans who were supportive of the changes and appreciated the enhanced atmosphere on campus,” said Christine Curtis, associate provost for Facilities.

The changes at the start of the 2002 football season were communicated to AU fans and visitors through letters, a 2002 Guide to Game Day brochure, e-mails and the World Wide Web.

(continued on page 5)
Message from the President

Dear Auburn Friends and Supporters,

Welcome to the inaugural edition of Auburn Commons.

With this new quarterly newsletter, I hope to keep you better informed about the commons—the shared values and experiences, and the people, programs and qualities that make Auburn University such an extraordinary place.

More than 146 years after Auburn first opened its doors, the university has grown into one of the largest and most comprehensive public research universities in the South. It is comprised of 13 colleges and schools in addition to scores of specialized units and centers.

We have a record enrollment this fall of 23,276 students, with more than 5,000 students graduating each year with baccalaureate, advanced and professional degrees.

Auburn is increasingly attracting outstanding students. In addition to teaching, our faculty is involved in public service outreach to our citizens and performing meaningful and practical research at the highest levels.

These multiple roles, combined with Auburn traditions and the Auburn Spirit, make Auburn a unique place within the higher education structure of this state. We are a university that firmly embraces a history of putting knowledge to work. Through Auburn Commons, I hope to share with you the progress that Auburn is making in those directions.

I hope that you will enjoy this publication, and I will look forward to receiving your feedback at commons@auburn.edu.

Sincerely,

Bill Walker

Grenell Focused on AU’s Diversity Mission

“I think I have the most exciting job in higher education right now,” says Keenan Grenell, Auburn University’s new interim assistant provost for diversity and multicultural affairs.

Grenell talks enthusiastically about opportunity born of crisis, about his belief in AU’s commitment to diversity and about the charge given him by AU interim Provost John Pritchett.

“I think some of the recent events here at Auburn have created an opportunity to make strides in the areas of diversity and multiculturalism that didn’t exist before,” Grenell said.

“I hear and see a sense of commitment. But there’s no question that we have a long way to go…and there is a real potential for this office to become overwhelmed. I think Dr. Pritchett realizes that and he has incorporated some short-term structure in my charge to guard against that.”

Grenell said he’s been asked to submit a detailed action plan. While he didn’t reveal all of the plan’s specifics, he said it would outline what his office would be doing to meet specific diversity-related goals and objectives.

Some of the elements of the plan include recruitment and retention of a diverse student body and, as a part of that, a close working relationship with the Office of Student Affairs.

“We want to have a strong focus on students here at Auburn,” Grenell said. “As such, there is a great need for establishing working relationships with the people in Student Affairs and identifying ways that we can help each other in meeting goals that are common to both of us—recruiting and retaining a number of minority students that is more in tune with the overall population of the state.”

Grenell also said he sensed the need for a new approach to running AU’s Office of Diversity and Multicultural Affairs.

“I need to identify what resources already exist at Auburn that we can learn from and build on to our desired ends. There is a lot of talent on this campus and we have to gather that talent together to help us recommit ourselves to diversity at Auburn,” Grenell said.

Keenan Grenell, Auburn University’s new interim assistant provost for diversity and multicultural affairs, discusses plans to meet specific diversity-related goals and objectives with his executive secretary, Bert Harris.
AU Deals with Surging Freshman Enrollment

More than 4,000 freshmen—is this too much of a good thing? That question came to Auburn’s top academic and admissions officers this past summer as they saw a huge surge of new freshmen developing for the fall. While other universities were struggling to fill their freshman classes, Auburn saw its freshman class swell by more than 10 percent in one year.

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A record 4,184 new freshmen were in classes for the start of fall semester on Aug. 19, up from 3,746 last year. That increase also contributed to a record total enrollment of 23,276. The previous records were 3,864 for new freshmen in 2000 and 22,469 total enrollment in 2001.

Faced with the largest growth in enrollment in decades, the Provost’s Office quickly organized academic and admissions officials, who found ways to meet the curricular needs of both the new students and the faculty.

Enrollment staff recognized early in the summer that something was amiss. Although there had been no change from previous years in admissions standards or in the numbers accepted, this year more students were showing up for Camp War Eagle orientation, where they registered for classes.

Interim Provost John Pritchett attributed the increase to several factors. High-quality academic programs and faculty were attractions, as in years past. The recruitment program in Student Affairs and word-of-mouth from satisfied students also played a large role this year, he said.

Pritchett noted that this year was also the first in which the university implemented a plan to help colleges and schools fill their enrollment needs by admitting students with clear career objectives in their areas of study. Those high school students are among the most committed to attending college and among the least likely to have a last-minute change of heart.

While some institutions have had to sacrifice quality to get more students, AU’s surge in freshman enrollment proved to be a case of quality in quantity. This fall’s freshmen had an average of 23.8 on their ACT college entrance exams and a high school grade point average of 3.4.

The high school GPA broke the previous record, set in 2001, of 3.34, and the ACT average was second only to the 23.9 ACT average of the freshman class of 1997.

In July, academic officers saw that they would have to come up with more instructors to teach core courses. The 438 additional students would need three to five courses each, primarily in core subjects within the College of Liberal Arts and the College of Sciences and Mathematics.

Classrooms were available, but faculty in the core courses already had full course loads.

The solution: Get faculty in the core areas from the main campus and Auburn University Montgomery to teach extra courses at Auburn for extra pay.

“It was a simple solution but not one you want to implement every year because the faculty already have a lot to do,” said Pritchett. Still, he said, faculty at both campuses responded beautifully to the request.

Golden Eagle ‘Tiger’ Taking It Easy

Auburn’s cherished 24-year-old golden eagle, Tiger, is taking it easy at her home in Auburn University’s Southeastern Raptor Rehabilitation Center after being sidelined in late September with age-related concerns. However, the Raptor Center has other eagles that can be ambassadors for wildlife conservation.

A 6-year-old bald eagle named Spirit flew for the remainder of the season and even appeared before President George W. Bush in Plainsman Park on Oct. 24.

Tiger is arthritic and is having more difficulty flying than in the past, said Joe Shelnutt, director of the Raptor Center. “At the games, we were having problems holding her attention.”

He says finding another golden eagle could be a time-consuming task, perhaps even impossible. According to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service guidelines, healthy birds must be released. Only those that cannot survive on their own may be kept for educational purposes.

(Tiger, continued on page 6)

UPLIFTING—Before Tiger was sidelined, her flights in Jordan-Hare Stadium enjoyed considerable popularity among fans.
Solar Decathletes Earn More Than Ranking

A strong finish in a national collegiate competition was the visible reward for a group of Auburn University students. But, long after the award has lost its glow, these students will carry with them the real accomplishments they earned in learning how to solve difficult problems, make a project work and be real team players.

AU students earned an overall third-place ranking in the U.S. Department of Energy’s Solar Decathlon, a first-of-its-kind competition to design, build and operate a home powered entirely by solar energy. They also earned top honors in several categories, including first place in the Energy Balance competition, ending the contest with as much energy as they had when they started, and the BP award for Performance-Setting Global Standards.

A multidisciplinary team of more than 100 students from the Samuel Ginn College of Engineering and the College of Architecture, Design and Construction began work in the fall of 2001 discussing and planning the home’s designs, from the standpoint of architecture and engineering.

Before the students went to the National Mall in Washington, D.C., to reconstruct and operate the 500 square-foot house during an 11-day competition, they spent thousands of hours planning and building the house.

Guiding the team was a core group of about a dozen faculty in engineering and architecture, led by Henry Brandhorst, deputy director of AU’s Space Research Institute, whose idea it was to enter the contest.

“It’s been interesting watching architecture and engineering students work together to balance design and function, as well as the production timelines,” says Brandhorst. “The educational opportunities have been outstanding for all involved.”

The students were recently recognized by the AU Board of Trustees, who passed a resolution commending them on their hard work and achievements and how well they represented the university.

Auburn’s team competed against 13 other universities from across the nation and Puerto Rico to power a modern lifestyle—including a home, a home-based business and a solar powered electric car—using only energy from the sun. Like its athletic counterpart, the Solar Decathlon consisted of 10 contests that tested skills ranging from lighting to energy balance to design and livability graphics and communication.

Larry Benefield, dean of the Samuel Ginn College of Engineering, praised the work of the students, especially considering the competition from other prestigious universities. “You can look to two big Texas schools (University of Texas and Texas A&M), Carnegie Mellon University and the Virginia schools to see what kind of competition we faced.”

Auburn officials estimate the cost of its part of the competition to be more than $250,000, and university development officers from engineering and architecture worked to solicit private funds. Atlanta-based Mirant, a leading global competitive energy company, and Chicago-based Exelon, one of the nation’s largest electric utilities, have each donated $75,000.

Other companies, like D&J Enterprises in Auburn, provided space to build the house. Students built the solar-powered house in one of the company’s large bay warehouses, and rolled the house into a nearby field to test it.

NATIONAL COVERAGE—C-Span video crew interviews AU student Leslie Hoke. The cable network is just one of many broadcast and print media who have interviewed AU students, bringing national attention to AU and the students’ work.
Poultry Facility Marks New Era

January 2004 will mark the beginning of a new era in poultry science at Auburn University when the Poultry Science Building is scheduled to be completed.

This 85,000-square-foot building, which is a nearly $20 million investment, will offer laboratory, classroom and office space for faculty, staff and graduate students.

“The expansion of departmental programs enabled by this new building will directly support undergraduate students majoring in Poultry Science,” said Don Conner, head of AU’s Department of Poultry Science.

The new facility, located near Lem Morrison Drive, will provide infrastructure for programs in poultry health, nutrition, reproductive physiology and management and genetics, as well as a broad program in food microbiology, safety and quality.

“This new building not only represents a commitment to Alabama’s poultry industry, it also represents Auburn’s and the industry’s commitment to the world’s consumers and to the rich promises of collaborative and interdisciplinary science,” said John Jensen, interim dean of the College of Agriculture.

Auburn began teaching poultry science in 1912. At the time, few people would have predicted the growth of the industry, which today contributes some $8.5 billion to the state’s economy.

“We have provided qualified graduates who bring exceptional expertise and training to the workforce,” Conner said. “Our research has solved myriad production, processing and marketing problems. Our outreach efforts ensure that research results are disseminated to the industry and to consumers quickly and clearly. In short, this is a full-service department representing a comprehensive educational approach that exemplifies Auburn University’s land-grant mission.”

A photographic record of the facility’s construction can be found at www.ag.auburn.edu/dept/ph/bldgnew.html

Samford Hall——

Continued from page 1

Although the exterior of the building is brick, much of the interior is wood that has been in place for more than a century. The internal structure of the building is supported by soft-brick masonry and wood beams dating, for the most part, from the original construction.

Samford was built in 1888-89 on the foundation of the original campus building, Old Main, which burned in 1887.

Officials say quick action is needed to reduce risks posed by fire hazards and termites.

Samford Hall has highly sensitive fire alarms and is regularly treated for termites but lacks many of the fire protection measures and termite resistance of more modern buildings constructed of concrete and steel.

Recent repairs on plumbing and electrical systems revealed advanced deterioration in parts of those systems and added to concerns about the overall condition of the building.

On the exterior, the building’s bricks are softer than those in more modern buildings and need special attention to preserve them for another century.

Samford Hall was placed on the university’s list for eventual restoration after Facilities Division inspectors encountered infestations of termites in several areas from the ground floor to the clock tower in 1999. Those infestations were treated, but termites have reappeared periodically and in various parts of the building since then.

During the coming year, planners will identify alternate office space for the units now in Samford Hall.

AU Student Publishes Book

Many people go through life thinking about writing a book someday.

Ryan Nicholas Belcher of Wetumpka, an AU student, has already published one book, Dreams: Gateway to the True Self, and is at work on a second.

Belcher’s 132-page paperback book, which retails for $10, is something of a case study on interpreting dreams and finding an identity.

“I think dreams are just a way for your subconscious to communicate your own wants and needs,” he says. “The best person to analyze a dream is the person who actually dreamed it, so I take my own dreams and serve as a case study. Whoever is ready can get the building blocks on how to do it themselves.”

Belcher, 21, who also paints, writes poetry and studies philosophy, says he was overwhelmed when he got the idea to write his first book.

By drawing inspiration from liberal arts classes and his parents, Auby Eugene Belcher and Angola Moody Rowe, and using his “pretty good time management” skills, he was able to finish the book while pursuing a degree in finance.

“It took me about five months to write it and about six months to get it published,” Belcher said, adding that it cost him about $1,500 to get his book published.

He’ll get his degree from AU in May 2003.

His book, which is available at amazon.com, barnesandnoble.com, booksamillion.com, 1stbooks.com and bookstores in Auburn, sold more than 100 copies in the first month.
Students Excited about Wireless Curriculum

With the addition of the nation's first Bachelor of Wireless Engineering degree program at Auburn this fall, students in its first class at the Samuel Ginn College of Engineering are excited about the possibilities the new curriculum will provide as they work toward their career goals.

"Before the wireless program was established I was in the Computer Engineering program," said Ron Jackson, a junior from Pensacola, Fla. "Last spring, I worked (while in AU's Cooperative Education program) with Scientific Research Corp. (SRC) in Atlanta—specifically in its wireless and IT departments. SRC specializes in research and development, as well as production of military communications equipment. While at SRC I was exposed to many wireless and RF (radio frequency) projects and real world applications. My experience at SRC fueled interest in the wireless realm of electrical engineering, so I began to look into the new wireless degree program here at Auburn. The wireless industry is growing and I believe the program Auburn offers allows me to gain a competitive edge."

"I chose the wireless program because I want to be at the edge of technology, and it seems that one of the directions technology is going is toward wireless," says Mike Newlin, a junior from Macon, Ga. "I would like to work in defense contracting, on military projects or on satellite/radar/communication technologies."

Chris Trueblood would like to use his degree to work for the Department of Defense or the National Security Agency on projects that involve national defense. The junior from Huntsville is also interested in alternate power sources—such as solar, hydrogen and wind—and wireless communication. "I had similar career goals before the wireless curriculum was born, but I anticipate that the wireless program will act as a helping hand in guiding me to fulfilling my goals. Because I will most likely be working with wireless systems in the future, I think that pursuing the wireless option will give me first-hand experience and exposure to the world of wireless," Trueblood added.

"I chose to try the new wireless curriculum because of the growing use of wireless technology," said John Jansen, a junior from Thomasville. "I've been working in telecommunications during high school and as a co-op student with Adtran. So, with that experience I am leaning towards the wireless communications business."

The curriculum allows students to specialize in hardware, software or networks. Those interested in a career with wireless service providers and related telecommunications companies may choose the network specialization option within either department.

Auburn Professor Named Top Teacher

A professor in AU's College of Veterinary Medicine has been named the nation's top veterinary teacher for his "dad-like" presence in and outside the classroom, as described by one of his students.

Steven Kincaid, professor of histology, received the 2002 National Carl J. Norden Award from the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges. A national selection committee chose him from 28 finalists, one from each North American veterinary college.

According to his colleagues, Kincaid has a gift for presenting complex subject matter in a clear, concise, and understanding manner that is effective in bridging clinical and basic sciences. "He is the consummate instructor," said Professor Edward Morrison. "His lectures are sharp, organized and tinged with humor. His compassion for teaching is honest and his impact on students is obvious and it instills a life-long learning experience. He treats our students with respect for the professionals they are."

Those attributes are among the reasons Kincaid was named the nation's best. And, even though it is an individual award, Kincaid is quick to praise others.

"Actually the award should be in recognition of Auburn's entire teaching ability," he said. "Many people work really hard and this should go to all of our outstanding faculty, staff and students."

Steven Kincaid assists veterinary freshman Enrique Carlo of Birmingham in the histology laboratory.
AU Research Draws Investors to Event

“ Auburn Day,” held Nov. 7 at the World Business Center in Birmingham, brought AU-developed technologies to the attention of some of the state’s leading investors.

“We believe it was a very successful effort.”

More than 60 venture capitalists attended the event, providing positive comments. “It is very important to continue this (type of effort),” wrote attendee James Rotch after the presentations were completed. Attendee Ed Rogers suggested that Auburn should take the lead in organizing a similar event on a statewide level. Others commented about the promising commercial potential offered in the technologies.

“IT was a packed house,” said Jan Thornton, director of AU’s Office of Technology Transfer. “I believe that some productive relationships were started, and we already are looking forward to taking Auburn technologies on the road again.”

Six of the university’s early- and late-stage research developments were introduced in 20-minute presentations. Among research featured were:

• Drug targeting systems developed by Henry Baker, Nancy Cox, Valery Petrenko, Tatiana Samoylova and Bruce Smith of AU’s Scott-Ritchey Research Center, and Vitaly Vodyanoy of the Department of Anatomy, Physiology and Pharmacology.

• A new wound healing technology developed by Mary Cupp and Ed Cupp of the Department of Entomology, and Steven Swaim, of the Scott-Ritchey Research Center.

• A microfibrous materials technology, developed by Bruce Tatarchuk of the Department of Chemical Engineering and licensed to IntraMicron Inc.

• A multi-purpose purification and decontamination process, developed by Dave Worley of the Department of Chemistry and licensed to Vanson Halosource Inc.

• A handwriting recognition technology, developed by William Confer and Richard Chapman of the Department of Computer Science and Software Engineering.

• A biodegradable fishing lure, developed by Jean Weese and Leonard Bell of the Department of Nutrition and Food Science, and Rusty Wright of the Department of Fisheries and Allied Aquacultures, licensed to Salco Enterprises LLC.

Auburn co-sponsored the event with the Economic Development Partnership of Alabama and the Entrepreneurial Center of Birmingham.

Outreach Publication to Benefit K-12

Auburn University Outreach is distributing a new publication, Auburn University and K-12—Partners in Learning, which highlights programs benefiting Alabama public school students and teachers.

“Auburn University has an impressive array of programs that serve K-12,” said David Wilson, associate provost and vice president for University Outreach, whose office initiated the project.

“The university is always seeking opportunities to use our expertise and resources to strengthen public education in Alabama,” Wilson added.

Stronger public education also helps Alabama’s economy. “We understand that having a top quality public education system is one of the primary precursors to economic development in our state,” said Wilson.

(K-12, continued on back page)
PRESIDENTIAL VISIT—Approximately 14,000 people gathered at AU’s Plainsman Park on Oct. 24 and saw President George W. Bush become the first U.S. President to yell “War Eagle” on the Auburn campus while in office. The president attracted the crowd during a campaign visit on behalf of Republican candidates running in November’s statewide elections. Franklin D. Roosevelt, in 1939, was the only other president to visit Auburn while in office.

K-12

(Continued from page 7)

The publication is being sent to all of Alabama’s public K-12 schools, principals and superintendents, state legislators, AU faculty and staff, and the Alabama Cooperative Extension System.

This distribution stresses AU’s commitment to Alabama’s K-12 school systems and presents some of the most successful ongoing projects, programs, initiatives and partnerships throughout Alabama. The brochure will also serve as a directory for school systems and individuals who are interested in gathering additional information or participating in these programs.

Royrickers Cook, special assistant to the vice president for University Outreach, co-authored the publication along with Ralph Foster, director of the Office of Outreach Information and Marketing.

“Here at Auburn University we are committed to assisting K-12 schools with developing Alabama’s school children both educationally and socially,” said Cook. “This commitment will continue to be reinforced through the numerous AU and K-12 partnerships that are ongoing and will be developed in the near future.”

For additional information about the publication or AU Outreach programs, contact University Outreach at 334-844-5700, or visit the website at www.auburn.edu/outreach.